IOWAccess Citizen Council Meeting
January 9, 1998, 9:00 a.m.
Des Moines, Veterans Affairs, Room 975

Present:
Carol French Johnson, Chair
Marilyn Adams
Greg Anliker
Brandon Burnett
Diane Kolmer
Dan Offenburger
Richard Reitsma
Abbi Swanson
Gordon Wigness
Jim Yenck (for Daryl Gray)

Staff:
Keri Badding, SPPG
Arlinda McKeen, SPPG
Linda Plazak, ITS

Welcome and Introductions
Carol French Johnson welcomed new member Gordon Wigness, representing AFSCME, to the Citizen Council.

Discussion of Privacy Issues
Jim Yenck from the Social Security Administration (SSA) was introduced to provide an overview of a Social Security Administration pilot project using the Internet to provide citizens with earnings information on-line. SSA held six forums throughout the country to address public concerns about privacy related to this pilot effort.

Under this SSA pilot, a person who wants to receive information will need to have an e-mail address which serves as a form of identification, and this limits accessibility. Users will have to provide certain information to prove who they are (e.g. date of birth, mother's maiden name). A person must supply personal identifying information in order to read SSA records. This limits accessibility also.

The scope of the SSA information available electronically has been reduced in response to citizen concerns. Current SSA information is available; earnings history for an individual is no longer included. At the Des Moines froum, the general public was overwhelmingly supportive of the Internet access to SSA data. The

"experts" in the industry were split approximately in half on whether they favor electronic access.

Some states are already providing SSA with state data in electronic form which allows federal and state data and information sharing.

Discussion and comments followed Yenck's presentation. Yenck pointed out that there were no specific citizen concerns about privacy stated at the Des Moines session. "Expert" concerns centered on the potential for improper use of an individual's information by someone who should not have gained access to the information.

The project was based on the hard copy procedures for requesting SSA information, including the five pieces of information required to confirm identity to request earnings information. These hard copy procedures are still in effect without the same modifications made to the electronically accessed information.

The Waterloo Public Library was a pilot site for SSA, and received no complaints from citizens about privacy. The biggest concern was that citizens may have entered incorrect information or misspellings and be denied the SSA response without any explanation. The system was very easy to use and citizens were pleased with the service.

Adverse publicity required changing the scope and criteria of the SSA pilot. SSA stepped in before there were any real problems. The national media raised and kept the issue of privacy before the public, creating the concerns which halted the project.

The electronic signature provides a traceable record for the path of the information. Thus, if an individual has the e-mail passwords, they could request information on individuals other than the one whose name is on the e-mail address.

Johnson noted that some of these same privacy issues may arise with some of the IOWAccess projects. The Citizen Council can play a role in the education of others to address any similar concerns before they arise.

There is a fine line between giving out all the information that is available and the level of security measurements in place to fully ensure the identity is correct. These issues apply to non-electronic information availability as well, and the concerns are legitimate.

The SSA response to concerns raised in the forums was to require an electronic signature (private e-mail address). SSA made it more difficult to get the information electronically.

SSA has an on-line system on which an individual can check their information at www.ssa.gov. From there a person can opt into the service and be allowed to access personal information.

IOWAccess Marketing and Public Education Plan

McKeen provided an overview of the rationale and the content in the marketing and public education plan for the entire IOWAccess effort.

The Council discussed the plan and noted a gap in the marketing plan which addresses the privacy issues. A suggestion was made that the Citizen Council determine the message to the public regarding privacy. There must be a consistent and concise message developed. It is the role of the Citizen Council to develop both the questions and the response to those questions.

The Citizen Council discussed meeting more frequently to ensure a high level of understanding and involvement, and to be proactive in addressing privacy and confidentiality issues. The Council's other role is to communicate Iowa citizens' concerns and help citizens understand how the system will work for them.

The Citizen Council sees its role as critical, but the Steering Committee will more likely lead the public education effort. The Citizen Council will be involved in those issues that are important to citizens.

Because IOWAccess is such a large and confusing project, it is easier to talk with people about smaller pieces of it, for example, one project or application at a time. This will help the public begin to visualize what it may do for them.

The Council discussed the need to have a buy-in to make IOWAccess happen. This effort needs to be more personal, with real projects and real services for real people.

People need to have access to the IOWAccess web site address so they can gather current information.

ITS staff will educate the public on the IOWAccess project in the months to come. Steering Committee members, Citizen Council members, and project members should also be involved in this effort. SPPG will be responsible for developing materials and will serve as support to ITS.

When accessing the IOWAccess webpage, PDF files make gathering information difficult. Downloading is a cumbersome process and not easily accessible for the general public. The information also seems to be a bit outdated, which may be because many of the projects have opted to meet quarterly. Many of the projects have also established a contractor to continue work on the project.

The Council suggested that the Website include more notes, more written information, and an illustration on how this program would actually work for a citizen.

Digital Signature Legislation Update and Discussion

Linda Plazak showed a video on digital signatures. She updated the group on the current legislation regarding digital signatures and noted that a bill has been drafted. Plazak commented that, for IOWAccess to work, a digital signature legislation needs to be passed. She asked group members to support this effort and contact their local legislators for support.

Plazak attended a meeting with various associations to explain digital signatures, electronic commerce, and the IOWAccess project. The associations seemed very supportive of the digital signature issue, but they questioned whether it would be possible to pass during this legislative session. We need to convey to people that the longer we wait, the more this effort is going to cost.

Plazak noted that the people who own the data will continue to control the data. It will be up to them to decide whether they wish to archive the information when using digital signaturing.

Other states have added a one dollar per transaction charge to the Motor Vehicle Licensing Agency. A person will still be able to access information the same way they do now, for free or at the same cost. Ten percent of the fee for transactions does not go to the vendor, but is reinvested into the system. There is commercial value to the system. This is a market-driven model, and consumers can still shoose how they access services. The key is choice.

IOWAccess Projects Update

Linda Plazak reported that Project 1 has gone through the RFP process. Three vendors put in proposals and Iowa Interactive was selected. Iowa Interactive is a Subchapter Corporation and is affiliated with the National Information Consortium , which has been responsible for making similar efforts happen in other states.

Each states products are somewhat different, but they share a common need for a Board which represents the public. Each state provides Secretary of State and Motor Vehicle Licensing information as value-added, fee based services. The dollar transaction fee is included in Division II of the digital signature bill. IOWAccess and information consumers need legislation to have this transaction fee added. It is important to speak to legislators and give them concrete information to move this issue forward.

Plazak noted that all of the projects have to be up and operational by September 1, 1998. They are currently moving along parallel to one another. The Project 1 vendor will establish the Internet-enabled technology that will provide the front door for the system and access to all IOWAccess services.

IOWAccess will benefit from the experience of the Project 1 vendor, which will bring many established and proven services to the state that are already available in other states.

The State of Illinois spent two years and a million and a half dollars to draft their digital signature bill. IOWAccess used the Illinois model to draft the Iowa digital signature bill which prevented us from having to reinvent the wheel.

Citizen Council members are encouraged to contact their local legislators and provide them with information on this issue.

Next Meeting Date
The Council is interested in a Project 1 web demonstration at the next Citizen Council meeting.

Group members agreed to begin meeting every other month beginning in March. The next scheduled Citizens Council Meeting is March 20, 1998 at 10:00 a.m. The site is yet to be determined.